

AFNS Review

Compilation of top Air Force News Service stories

Feb. 23, 1998

Assignment Review Group submits recommendations

WASHINGTON D.C. (AFNS - 980182) — After a two-month effort of studying the Officer Assignment System, the group conducting a top-to-bottom review has submitted its recommendations for changes to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan.

Led by retired Air Force Gen. John A. Shaud, the 17-person group was commissioned in December to review the system to ensure its principles and practices were meeting Air Force needs. Ryan will review the recommendations, along with other senior Air Force leaders, and is scheduled in March to announce the recommendations the service will implement. Any recommendations he approves most likely won't come on line until October.

"It was two months of hard work where the group considered its own experiences, input from commanders, officers in the field and the OAS survey, along with examining the requirements of our Air Force to meet the needs of our national defense," Shaud said. "I'm confident our recommendations will only enhance our ability to defend our nation, improve the stability and predictability of the assignment system while ensuring it's a fair and just system for all."

Ryan will announce specifics of the recommendations in March. At that time, the results of the OAS survey taken over the Christmas holiday season will also be released.

While not giving specifics, Shaud did discuss some of the recommendations submitted to Ryan.

"In our view, we felt the current system tilted more towards an officer's individual desires and not enough consideration given to the needs of the nation, service and officer professional development," he said. "While the personal desires of the officer are a factor,

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it should only be one of many considerations used for making assignments and not the driving factor. Whatever assignment system is used by the Air Force, the needs of the nation and Air Force must be paramount and, the majority of officers who took the survey agree with us on that point."

Another recommendation the group made was to strengthen the role of commanders and how they interact with the individual officers in the assignment process. It is what puts the word "person" in "Personnel," Shaud said.

"We found cases where officers were volunteering for positions, being selected for them, and their commander didn't know about it until they were notified of the officer's assignment," Shaud said. "That just isn't right in our book. Commanders know their officers better than anyone in the assignment process and they should play a major role in the process. It runs parallel with the mentoring, formal and informal feedback and performance report programs we entrust our commanders with now. It seemed natural their role should be strengthened."

The final area Shaud discussed is the use of technology in the mechanics of making an assignment while keeping visibility in the system.

"Officers are spending a great deal of

time surfing the Web looking and waiting for specific jobs to be posted on the assignment bulletin board so they can volunteer for them," he said. "If implemented, hopefully we've devised a way for officers, working with their commander, to communicate their assignment preferences to their assignment team at the Air Force Personnel Center. The center will have this record on file and will automatically consider them for these types of assignments when a future requirement is identified."

There are other recommendations the group made, but they all support these major factors the group identified and made recommendations to improve, he said.

Shaud said he is proud of the efforts of his 17-person team and believes the force will be as well after Ryan makes his final decision, announces the results, and officers learn the specifics of the changes.

"This group represents the best of our officer corps in the significant understanding of military values," he said. "They came from the field and were people who've experienced the system first-hand. They had the best interests of our nation, Air Force and officers at heart and worked tirelessly to make recommendations which would only strengthen the officer assignment system."

Benken talks about training, discipline in Air Force people

by Staff Sgt. Cheryl L. Toner

Air Force News Service - 980181

KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, Texas

— "Forget everything you learned in basic training. This is the

real Air Force," is one comment Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Eric Benken said he hopes he doesn't hear anyone utter.

During a recent visit to San Antonio, the top



enlisted person said one of his current focuses is about the continuation of training, and in particular, discipline.

How the Air Force trains its future leaders is vital and Benken said the process needs to start early in an airman's career.

"I owe my success to what I learned in basic training," said the 12th CMSAF. He said he still spit-shines his boots before he goes on temporary duty, salutes the same sharp way he did 28 years ago and still wears his hat when required, "even when nobody is looking." He pays attention to military courtesies and bearing.

While many may think these little rituals of military life are insignificant, the chief doesn't see it that way. And neither should anyone in the Air Force.

The chief, who has visited more than 50 bases since taking his position in November 1996, said the Air Force continues to pull top notch new recruits.

Everyone carries with them the fundamental "tools," enabling them to master "the kinds of discipline that make you a better professional," he said. "It's the kind of discipline that you should embrace as an Air Force member. We are a team — and teams only win by being well-disciplined and giving their best at everything they attempt."

The shine on his boots will tell you that Benken lives what he says.

"In the 1970s, we had a non-volunteer

force — many who served were draftees. Some were actually told to go in the military or go to jail," said the chief. "They didn't want to be here and we had all kinds of discipline problems."

Fast forward about 25 years and you'll find the current all-volunteer force enlists for different reasons, such as travel and education benefits. But, according to the chief, they go through "quite a metamorphosis" in six weeks. Following basic training, "Most will tell you, 'I'm convinced I'm here to serve my country' and 'I'm willing to put my life on the line for my nation,'" he said.

This is where Benken said first line supervisors hold the key to discipline.

"When a young troop arrives to your duty section following basic training and advanced training, they are a virtual blank page and you're going to write a story as a supervisor," he said. "They're ready. They want to be led and want to be supervised properly. All they want to do is succeed and we need to give them the right start. Fundamental discipline is the key to that success."

More information on the chief's views can be found on the Internet at <http://www.af.mil/lib/cmsaf/>.

ACC commander touts Air Force capabilities

by Kristen M. Butler

20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.

(AFNS - 980188) — Gen. Richard E.

Hawley, Air Combat Command commander, and his wife Mary Ellen

visited Shaw Feb. 10 - 11,

as the 20th Fighter Wing prepared to send additional personnel, aircraft

and equipment to the

Persian Gulf region.

"I think this group is well equipped, well-trained and they've got the resources needed to do their job effectively, and to succeed if we require them to," Hawley said of the deployed assets.

Their primary mission is to provide suppression of enemy air defenses if and when needed. The F-16CJ has the capability to locate, identify and destroy enemy surface to air defenses and associated radar, according to Col. Dan Leaf,

20th Fighter Wing commander.

"Shaw plays an absolutely critical role," Hawley said. "SEAD is one of the most important missions we have in the Air Force. It opens the door for all other forces to do their work. It takes down those surface-to-air missile defenses so other weapons systems can attack the targets we would be after in the event that we have to execute when we get there. It's hard to overstate how important that is."

Hawley explained that today's smaller Air Force is better and more capable than the force deployed during the Gulf War of 1991 because many weapons systems have been upgraded, there is a greater capability to deploy weapons with precision and there is new technology allowing performance under adverse weather conditions.

Although Defense Secretary William S. Cohen stated Feb. 6 that diplomacy is still the best way to handle the Iraqi situation, he promised a "significant" air campaign if no solution to the crisis is found.

He said the primary objective for using force is to reduce or curtail Saddam Hussein's ability to manufacture, store or reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction. Military force would also limit Iraq's ability to threaten its neighbors. Cohen also stressed that President Clinton has not yet decided to use force.

Although the current situation with Iraq was the hot topic during Hawley's visit, he also had other important items on his agenda. During his two-day visit Hawley toured many of Shaw's facilities and met with everyone from airmen basic to general.

"Everywhere I went today I found

people who were

working to improve

the way we do our

work," Hawley said.

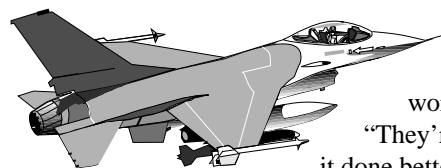
"They're finding ways to get

it done better, faster, cheaper,

with fewer people and less money -

and that's in all of our best interests, especially as commander of Air Combat Command, in times where budgets are as constrained as they are today. When we can find ways to get our work done better and cheaper, we're going to do a better job for the country."

"I try to get out in the field a lot. I find as a commander, you learn a lot and you get to talk to people who are in the Air Force every day - and as always I've



AFNS Review

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learned a lot here at Shaw," Hawley said.

"I've seen a lot of great people, doing great work for the Air Force and their country. These people are working under very difficult conditions and we ask a lot of them.

"I'm delighted with what I see here - great team spirit, great leadership, very effective people doing good work and prepared to fill the mission." (Courtesy of ACC News Service)

de Leon Sets 7 Critical Priorities for TRICARE

by Douglas J. Gillert

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980187) — Force protection and access to health care are among seven objectives Defense Undersecretary Rudy de Leon outlined recently at the 1998 TRICARE worldwide conference.

The Pentagon's personnel and readiness chief lauded the 1,400 military health care professionals for their efforts to successfully implement TRICARE, DOD's managed health care plan. "If you want to know why the system works, you only need to look at the people in the (Military Health System)," de Leon said. "Your work does not go unnoticed. While there are challenges and issues before us, I have great confidence in your skills."

de Leon then urged the medics to adopt "seven priorities that are critical to the military health system:"

- Protecting deployed forces from health hazards. de Leon said the medics should focus on sickness prevention, hazard protection and keeping troops healthy for deployment. He listed immunizations and training service members how to protect themselves in a nuclear, biological and chemical environment.

- Improving access to health care. de Leon noted that while there has been a concerted effort to improve appointment systems at military hospitals and clinics, "the critics have the high ground. It's tough to get in," he said. "We have to work better."

- Taking care of older patients. de Leon said DOD has to find a way to take care of patients 65 and older, who fall under Medicare rules. Although he expressed optimism the Medicare subvention package now at the Department of

More F-117A Nighthawks deploy to Southwest Asia

by Airman Chris Uhles

49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. (AFNS - 980193) — About 140 troops and six F-117A Nighthawks from Holloman deployed last week to Southwest Asia to add to the Air Force aircraft and thousands of Air Force members already in the area.

About 70 people from various units within the 49th Fighter Wing deployed to directly support F-117 operations.

Additionally, about 35 people from the 48th Rescue Squadron, deployed, as well as 20-30 49th Materiel Maintenance Group members.

Defense Secretary William Cohen signed the order last weekend, though he continues to emphasize U.S. efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the current crisis regarding Iraq.



According to Brig. Gen. Dennis Larsen, 49th Fighter Wing commander, deploying Holloman members are all ready to support the tasking to Southwest Asia. "We're ready — we stay ready," Larsen said.

Larsen went on to say that it's important to recognize that before this Stealth deployment, there was a solid airpower force in the region already.

"We sent six F-117As and 200 Holloman folks to the region in November to join the thousands of Air Force people, and the airpower they support, that have remained combat ready in the region since the end of Desert Storm," he said. "Not only is the Air Force ready now," Larsen said, "We've been ready."

Health and Human Services will soon open military facilities to the elderly, he said DOD also is studying other options for the future. "In the short term, however, TRICARE Senior (enrollment of the over-65 population in TRICARE) will be one of our highest priorities," he said.

- Promoting health and wellness. He cited statistics showing smoking, taking drugs and heavy drinking are all down within DOD, and that improves military readiness. "The armed forces is a model for American society," he said, but told the medics the battle against substance abuse must be ongoing.

- Sharing more resources and information with the Department of Veterans Affairs. de Leon said DOD and VA continue discussing ways to better interact, and a congressional commission is studying the relationship between DOD and VA medical facilities.

- Leveraging information technology. de Leon said he strongly backs two major medical initiatives: computerized health records and the new Personal Identification Carrier. The latter program would digitally stamp medical information onto

"dog tags" soldiers would carry with them into battle. The Army is currently field-testing the devices, and early reports of their effectiveness have been positive.

- Communicating. "People in the field are not always well-versed in what the health care community is doing for them," de Leon said. He said a lack of information about health programs prompts lower usage of military medical facilities, something he's personally seen during field trips. "Think about how you can let them know how your [medical treatment facility] measures up," he said. He also encouraged them to meet with periodically with their customers, including line commanders, troops, retirees and other beneficiaries.

de Leon voiced strong concern about the health care needs of military retirees. "How we treat retirees is an important display of how we will treat the current active duty force when they are retired," he said.

"While we have a system in transition, it is a system dedicated to excellence," de Leon concluded. He thanked Dr. Ed Martin, acting assistant secretary of



You are all recruiters

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980184) — In fiscal year '97 the Air Force met its enlisted recruiting goal with 30,200 new recruits. The challenge for today's recruiters is a competitive market.

A good economy provides an opportunity for today's youth to attend college. Low unemployment means more job opportunities for today's youth. In response, the Air Force has increased the number of recruiters and purchased more advertising to help overcome these challenges.

What can the Air Force offer these newest enlisted recruits?

College credit for military training, tuition assistance — up to 75 percent — for classes taken during off-duty hours, and up to \$15,400 from the Montgomery G.I. Bill for a higher education are a few of the opportunities available.

Professional military education — leadership, communication and management training — and job experience are additional benefits. In addition, the Air Force is creating a certification and licensure program that would provide national certification and licensing in many career areas to include services, security forces, transportation and some medical areas.

In today's competitive market it is important that each Air Force member lead the way as recruiters and mentors for our youth. As satisfied customers, Air Force members can assist recruiters by carrying the message to friends, neighbors and acquaintances that the Air Force offers many opportunities. Remember: You are all recruiters.

(NOTE: Have any topics you'd like addressed in People First? If so, please e-mail your suggestion to people.first@dp.hq.af.mil or FAX us at 703-695-7433)

defense for health affairs, for guiding implementation of TRICARE since 1992.

"I am going to miss you and would like to thank you for everything you have done for military medicine," he said. Martin, a rear admiral in the Public Health Service, retires next month after nearly 23 years' public service.

TRICARE Management Activity launched

by Douglas J. Gillert
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980179) — Military health patients won't notice anything different immediately, but in the long run, the new TRICARE Management Activity could improve DOD health care services.



Deputy Director Diana Tabler said the new DOD Health Affairs field agency, which stood up Feb. 10, will ensure consistent implementation of health care reforms and move the military health system toward performance-based management. Tabler announced creation of the agency at the TRICARE worldwide conference here Feb. 9.

Health Affairs set up the activity to comply with Defense Secretary William Cohen's defense reform initiative. The December 1997 initiative called for DOD offices to separate their operations and support elements from policy-making. While Health Affairs policy makers remain housed in the Pentagon, its TRICARE operations and support will now reside in suburban Washington and Denver. The agency incorporates the TRICARE Support Office, formerly CHAMPUS, based in Aurora, Colo.

Tabler said the new agency's priorities include force medical protection, Medicare subvention (delivery of health care to Medicare-eligible beneficiaries over the age of 65) and preventive medicine-wellness issues. The agency also will facilitate a consolidation of TRICARE regional lead agents and infrastructure reductions, and oversee pending transfer of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences from DOD to the Navy.

Located near the National Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md., the joint-service medical school will continue serving the Air Force and Army medical communities, as well as the Navy.

Some 439 employees currently staff the new agency, but Tabler said that number will be reduced eventually to 363. Besides Tabler, TRICARE Management Activity leadership includes Navy Rear Adm. Thomas Carrato, chief operating officer. A director has not yet been chosen.

Exercise Keen Edge '98 begins in Japan

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980180) — Keen Edge '98, a joint/bilateral command post exercise involving Japan Self Defense Forces and U. S. military forces began Feb. 12 and runs through Feb. 20. The exercise takes place at U.S. and Japanese military installations throughout Japan.

The annual Keen Edge/Keen Sword exercise series alternates each year between Keen Edge, a command post exercise and Keen Sword, a field training exercise.

During Keen Edge '98, Japan and U.S. military headquarters staffs will use computer simulations of force employment to test tactics, techniques and procedures.

Exercise participants will use the computerized joint theater level simulation system, which simulates movement of forces and equipment in the field.

Approximately 2,200 U.S. and Japan military personnel will participate in Keen Edge '98, including those U.S. forces assigned to Headquarters, U. S. Forces Japan; Fifth Air Force; Seventh Fleet; U.S. Naval Forces Japan; U.S. Army Japan; and the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The exercise will be directed by Lt. Gen. John B. Hall Jr., commander, U.S. Forces Japan, and Adm. Kazuya Natsukawa, chairman of the Joint Staff Council.

Promotion tests aren't a 'crap shoot'

by Staff Sgt. Cheryl L. Toner
Air Force News Service - 980196

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Look in the mirror if you want to see who drives many of the questions you are asked in your promotion test, said test officials here.

One subject near and dear to every enlisted person in the Air Force is promotion testing, according to the Air Force Occupational Measurement Squadron commander. "Our mission is global," said Lt. Col. George Kailiwai III. "We touch every NCO."

The AFOMS is chartered with improving Air Force capabilities by providing occupational analyses, promotion tests, and study guides to support Air Force personnel management programs.

While this small group of 150 people — many of whom are psychologists — is responsible for something so far-reaching, they don't do it in a vacuum, according to Monty Stanley, Test Development Flight chief.

"The tests are not written by a bunch of pointy-headed psychologists," he said. "They're written by senior NCOs in each career field."

The psychologists are there to ensure — for each and every question — that the "right answer is right and the wrong answers are wrong," said Stanley.

What most NCOs may not realize though, according to the commander, is that every person who tests has a say — to an extent — in what they're tested on.

All career fields are surveyed about every four years and each participant answers more than 1,000 questions about tasks they perform and the percentage of a duty day it takes to perform those tasks. Not everyone who is eligible to test is surveyed; however, all NCOs in smaller career fields usually are, according to Stanley.

Under the Weighted Airman Promotion System, enlisted members compete for promotion using six "weighted" factors. Two of the weighted factors are the Specialty Knowledge Test, a 100-question test on job-specific knowledge, and the Promotion Fitness Examination, a 100-question test on general Air Force knowledge.

The SKT

The survey results, or occupational analysis data, is one of three sources of information that drive the questions formed for the SKT. So, if you pencil-whipped that last survey, you've probably shot yourself in the foot, according to Stanley.

What you don't have an input to — but it is generally available at your fingertips — is the Specialty Training Standard, which lists duties required for each skill level. This second source of information for the SKT is usually maintained somewhere in your supervisor's desk.

Finally, a group of senior NCOs in each career field meets annually to update the SKT. The NCOs are selected based upon their breadth of knowledge in their particular career fields, according to Stanley. "This is not a static test," said Stanley. "It's revised every year to keep up with changes and to deter test compromise."

"We're different from other services," Stanley said. To make the test as objective as possible, "We bring in senior NCOs from the field. We want people from the flight line and the back shops."

An average of four people are in the group and each one has veto power. If any one member of the test revision group doesn't agree with a question, it's pitched, according to Stanley. Also, references for the questions are limited to the Career Development Courses and references readily available in all work areas, he said. "Fairness is the key."

The PFE

The process for updating the PFE is a little different, according to Chief Master Sgt. David McDaniel, professional development flight chief. The two determining factors for the PFE are an advisory council and another survey.

The Military Knowledge and Testing Standard Advisory Council sets the

standard for what is considered essential knowledge for each grade, much like the STS. MKTS council members are the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and senior enlisted advisors from major commands and selected field operating and direct reporting units. The council meets biennially to determine the applicability of information in the study guides and approve new information, according to the chief.

However, according to McDaniel, it's not just the chiefs who decide what to keep and what to cut. A field survey is given to about 6,000 NCOs worldwide and information gleaned from the results is what the chiefs discuss.

Common questions

Test developers receive many questions and hear a number of misconceptions about the tests. Following are answers to some frequently asked questions:

Q. Where do test makers get information for the PFE questions? It can't be from my PFE study guide.

A. Contrary to what it may seem, all questions came from sources available to all testers. Questions are formulated from information contained in the WAPS catalog, which is available from your unit WAPS monitor. The catalog is also available on the Air Force Personnel Center home page at <http://www.afpc.af.mil>.

Q. Why are the questions so hard?

A. "We write them hard on purpose," said Stanley. "This separates those who know what they're doing from those who are average," he said. "I'd hate to know that I got 90 or 95 and didn't have a chance," said McDaniel. According to McDaniel and Stanley, the average score on the PFE and SKT is in the low 50s. "So, don't feel bad if your score isn't high," said McDaniel. "You may not get promoted, but you shouldn't feel bad."

Q. Why does it take so long to get

The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he never would be found out.
—Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859)

the test results?

A. After everyone eligible tests, a "window" is built into the system to review all test questions that have been challenged. If a question is no longer considered valid, according to Stanley, it is then thrown out. That sounds simple, according to Stanley, but this means every test has to be rescored to reflect the change. This also accounts for a final score that shows a percentage, such as 62.72 out of 100 possible points.

For more information, go to the Air Force Occupational Measurement Squadron home page on the Internet at <http://www.omsq.af.mil/>.

AFPC releases 1998 second half board schedule

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS - 980200) — The selection board schedule for the second half of 1998 kicks off with an enlisted supplemental board Aug. 31, according to officials with the Air Force Personnel Center here.

The enlisted supplemental board is one of 23 selection boards set for the last half of 1998. In all, AFPC will host 46 boards for the year. Results from boards are generally released eight to 10 weeks after the boards' convening date. The remaining board schedule for 1998 includes:

- March 16 — Captain Boards (Medical Service Corps, Biomedical Sciences Corps, and Nurse Corps);
- March 25 — Air National Guard Colonel Federal Recognition Review Board, and Captain Board (JAG);
- April 6 — Major Boards (Line, BSC);
- May 4 — Enlisted Supplemental Board;
- May 18 — Officer Special Selection Boards;
- June 1 — Colonel Board (MSC); Lieutenant Colonel Boards (Line, BSC, Chaplain); Major Board (MSC); and Captain Board (JAG);
- Aug. 31 — Enlisted Supplemental Board;
- Sept. 9 — Air National Guard Colonel Federal Recognition Review Board;
- Sept. 14 — Officer Special Selection Boards;
- Sept. 21 — Captain Boards (Line, BSC, MSC, NC, JAG and Chaplain);

- Oct. 5 — Command Screening Board;
- Oct. 19 — Chief Master Sergeant Evaluation Board;
- Nov. 2 — Senior Service/Intermediate Service School Boards;
- Nov. 9 — Colonel Boards (MC, DC); Lieutenant Colonel Boards (MC/DC); Major Boards (MC/DC); and
- Dec. 1 — Colonel Boards (Line, JAG, Chaplain, BSC); and Captain Board (JAG).

(Courtesy of AFPC Public Affairs)

Air Force dedicates newest B-2 to Arizona

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFNS - 980178) — The Air Force will name the nation's newest B-2 Spirit stealth bomber the "Spirit of Arizona" in a ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., March 20.

The Spirit of Arizona, the 18th B-2 stealth bomber to be named, will be on display immediately following the ceremony, which is open to the public.

Scheduled to preside over the activity are Gen. Richard E. Hawley, commander of Air Combat Command, and Mr. Kent Kresa, chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer of Northrop Grumman Corp.

Col. John D.W. Corley, commander of the 355th Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, will host the event. Also invited to attend the ceremony are all members of Arizona's congressional delegation and Arizona's governor.

The B-2 stealth bomber, based at Whiteman AFB, Mo., is capable of delivering conventional and nuclear munitions anywhere on the globe.

Its combination of low observability, large-payload capacity, near-precision munitions and long range give it a unique ability to penetrate sophisticated defenses and threaten an enemy's war-making capability.

The B-2 Spirit is an integral part of the Air Force's bomber force, which also

includes the B-1B Lancer and the B-52H Stratofortress.

Together, this bomber fleet gives the nation the capability to rapidly respond to crises anywhere in the world with tremendous lethality, at minimal risk to American lives. (Courtesy of Air Combat Command News Service)

Air Force announces FY '98 drawdown program deadline

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980198) — With its fiscal 1998 force reduction goals within reach and as force levels stabilize, the Air Force is ending acceptance of applications for its various separation programs for lieutenant colonels and below as of March 3.

Colonels should contact the Colonels Group directly regarding application submissions.

The program, which opened Dec. 2, is ending acceptance of applications because the point in the fiscal year when all date of separation applications should be submitted is fast approaching, officials said. As with all officer date-of-separation requests, the Air Force requires a six-month application lead time.

Service officials expect officers have decided whether or not they will separate in fiscal 1998.

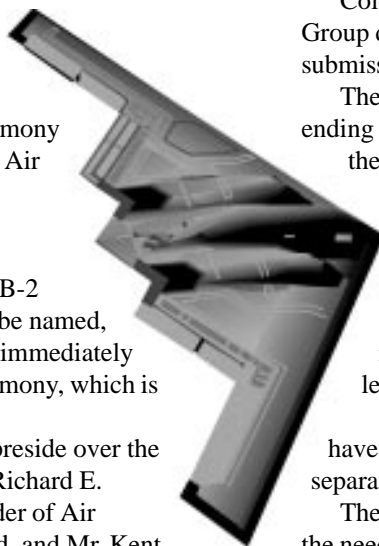
The deadline merely reminds them of the need to formally make their wishes known.

Lt. Gen. Michael D. McGinty, deputy chief of staff for personnel, noted that "as promised when we announced the programs, involuntary separations would be used as a last resort. I'm extremely happy we will be able to meet our goals through voluntary methods."

Almost 500 officers have applied for early retirement while another 375 have applied for waivers to active-duty service commitments, the main two programs used.

These figures, added to projected normal separation losses, will enable the service to reach its goals. An enlisted program was not needed for fiscal 1998 since its reduction target will be reached through normal attrition.

With the fiscal year 1998 application process ending, McGinty added, many



members may wonder whether there will be a fiscal 1999 program, and if so, when it will open.

"Right now, if we have a program at all, it will most likely be very focused on specific skills for force structure reasons," he said. "Since end strength decreases by small numbers for fiscal 1999, we don't think we'll need a large program. It's almost assured we'll not have an enlisted drawdown program."

McGinty went on to remind members, who may not recall, that drawdown programs are force reduction tools, not entitlements, and are only exercised when needed.

"Even back in the early 1990s, Air Force leaders said that toward the end of the decade when the drawdown wound down, the programs would get smaller and smaller, and they were right," he said. "Consider that we started the drawdown in 1986 with 608,000 members and we are now down to 371,000 members. We achieved 95 percent of the reductions using voluntary methods, and that is truly an Air Force success story."

Applications should be submitted to military personnel flights by March 3. The Air Force Personnel Center will then evaluate all requests considering each officer's desires, career field manning, etc., and have a decision on all applications by April 15.

DFAS can assist with missing or incorrect W-2s

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS - 980190) — The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is providing assistance to any service members, civilian employees, military retirees or annuitants who have not received or need corrections to their 1997 Federal Tax and Wage Statements (Form W-2).

Service members who need assistance should first contact their appropriate local finance offices. If the finance offices cannot help, active duty members can call 1-800-755-7413. Reserve members can call 1-800-855-7413.

Civilian employees should contact their local customer support representative.

Military retirees who do not receive Form 1099R, Distributions From Pensions, Annuities, etc., should call 1-800-

Now Showing: Feb. 23 edition of Air Force Television News

KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS - 980199) — The winners and the losers in a massive Air Force restructuring plan is the top story in the current edition of Air Force Television News. The program details which bases will gain personnel and which will lose in the reshuffling of service assets.

Also featured in this edition of the program is an Eye on the Air Force segment that examines how the Air Force is managing its "zero tolerance" program. Staff Sgt. Erin Webb spent several weeks looking into the Air Force attempts to erase sexual harassment, beginning with the moment a potential recruit walks into a recruiting office. And, Sgt. Rusty Barfield shows how one Air Force base and its bomb squad are helping make a dent on drug trafficking and manufacturing in California.

Air Force Television News is a bi-weekly production of Air Force Internal Information. It is distributed on video tape to more than 3,000 military and civilian outlets worldwide, as well as being seen on more than 700 cable outlets nationwide. Viewers can comment on the program by using the e-mail address: aftn@master.pa.af.mil.

321-1080. However, due to the high volume of requests, retirees may experience delays.

Those annuitants who do not receive Form 1099R, Distribution From Pensions, Annuities, etc., can request a form through the automated system at 1-800-435-3396.

Additional tax information for all DFAS customers is available on the agency's Web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/tax/index.htm>. (Courtesy of DFAS Public Affairs)



HQ USSOCOM awarded Joint Meritorious Unit Award

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS - 980201) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton has approved the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for members of Headquarters U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., for exceptionally meritorious achievement.

The timeframe for the award is March 1, 1994 through Nov. 5, 1997, with eligibility limited to those U.S. military forces present at the time and who directly participated in the service or achievement for 30 days or more for the JMUA. Additional units sharing in this award include the Army Aviation Support Element and the USSOCOM Deployment Cell.

Military members must be assigned or attached by official orders to the joint unit receiving the JMUA. Local commanders may waive, on an individual basis, the 30-day minimum requirement for individuals — Air Force Reserves on active-duty or TDY personnel — who, in the purview of the commander contributed directly to the achievement cited, and were assigned on official orders to the awarded unit during the time frames.

Members eligible for the JMUA should report to their servicing military personnel flight's career enhancement section and provide supporting documentation (performance report, copy of decorations citation with special orders, certificate of achievement signed by on-site commander, travel voucher, etc.) verifying they were assigned to the unit. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs)

HQ NORAD garners Joint Meritorious Unit Award

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS - 980202) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton has approved the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for members of Headquarters North American Aerospace Defense Command for exceptional meritorious achievement.

Members of the Combat Operations Staff, Peterson AFB, Colo. and Cheyenne Mountain Air Station, Colo., are also

eligible for the award.

The timeframe for the award is July 1, 1992 through Aug. 26, 1996, with eligibility limited to those U.S. military forces present at the time and who directly participated in the service or achievement for 30 days or more for the JMUA.

Military members must be assigned or attached by official orders to the joint unit receiving the JMUA. Local commanders may waive, on an individual basis, the 30-day minimum requirement for individuals — Air Force Reserves on active-duty or TDY personnel — who, in the purview of the commander contributed directly to the achievement cited, and were assigned on official orders to the awarded unit during the time frames.

Members eligible for the JMUA should report to their servicing military personnel flight's career enhancement section and provide supporting documentation (performance report, copy of decorations citation with special orders, certificate of achievement signed by on-site commander, travel voucher, etc.) verifying they were assigned to the unit. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs)

Defense Department issues "Operation Be Fit" logo

WASHINGTON (AFNS - 980185) —

Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy Frank Rush has approved a new logo for the Department of



Defense's initiative, "Operation Be Fit."

In approving the logo, Rush said, "The physical fitness of our service members has always been important because we clearly need to have a fit force ready to defend the nation. The fitness of their families and others who make up our military community is also important since we recognize that physical fitness leads to fewer illnesses and a higher level of well-being."

"Within the Department of Defense that means improved readiness, a higher quality of life, greater productivity, and lower health care costs," Rush said, "This is a great program. It's a rallying point around which our installation commanders

can take action to get people up and get them active."

The design selected for "Operation Be Fit" was submitted by Liz Buchalter, a graphics designer within the Sales Directorate of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service headquarters in Dallas.

Buchalter said her design was a best effort "to meet all of the design concepts and project a clean, fresh image." Her design includes the words "Be Fit" separated by a figure of a person with arms outstretched.

The basic logo colors are red, white, and blue, although there will be some variations depending upon how the logo is used.

The Department of Defense will soon release specific guidelines for use of the logo at military installations.

Her design was one of a number of submissions reviewed by focus groups at select military installations to determine which design best fit the goals of "Operation Be Fit." After reviewing the comments made by these focus groups, a committee representing each of the military Services recommended selection of Buchalter's design.

"Operation Be Fit" is a Department of Defense program initiative designed to place renewed emphasis on the physical

fitness of the entire military community. This initiative builds on the significant efforts already ongoing within each of the military services by combining expertise within the Department of Defense

and by adding DOD emphasis and endorsement to those endeavors.

The goals of "Operation Be Fit" are to improve and expand program opportunities in fitness, sports, and recreation activities that involve physical activity and increase individual participation in physical activities within the military community.

Rush concluded: "'Operation Be Fit' is good for the members of our military communities and it's good business. What we spend in fitness, sports, and recreation programs that lead to increased physical fitness is a sound investment in healthier, more productive individuals and communities." (Courtesy of DefenseLINK News)

If you can't wait a whole week for Air Force News,

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